
ARLINGTON ARTS CENTER KICKS OFF SUMMER EXHIBITIONS WITH COVID-INSPIRED *WE CAN'T PREDICT TOMORROW*

Nine diverse visual artists provide a raw look into their creative processes during the pandemic

DATE: June 28, 2021

(Arlington, VA) - On view through August 28, *We Can't Predict Tomorrow* is a hopeful glimpse into the unexpected ways nine artists approached the relentless tumult of the COVID-19 global pandemic. In sculpture, photography, installation, drawing, and painting, the works reveal themes that have taken on a heightened urgency under the duress of the prolonged quarantine and isolation in the U.S.: issues of social justice, climate change, and



Bahar Yürükoğlu, still from *IYKYK*, 2021

the intense longing for sanctuary, community, and shared experiences. The works in *We Can't Predict Tomorrow* offer a way to heal from the trauma of the past year while simultaneously forging a joyful path into the future. Experienced together, these works transport visitors through a time when humanity lived at the knife's edge of uncertainty and found ways to not only survive, but to keep on living.

Organized throughout the pandemic by guest curator Amanda Jirón-Murphy, *We Can't Predict Tomorrow* features work by nine multi-disciplinary artists:

James Balo creates a safe space for the exploration of Black queer love and family histories through Black storytelling, fashion, and performance in *SPEAK CHILE*, which was created, performed, and filmed during the pandemic as part of Divya Nayar's 2020 exhibition *Refusing Refusal*.

Nakeya Brown's photo suite *X-pressions: Black Beauty Still Lives* wistfully pays homage to black hairstyles and fashion through found objects and images from magazine advertisements and other print media from the 70s, 80s, and 90s.

Tommy Bobo's *Hold the divine in mine (to H.S. Leonard)* is a swan song to pre-Covid collective euphoria; in this new video installation he transforms online footage of a live concert into abstract pulses of light and color.

Leigh Davis used her years of research in End of Life experiences to create *Reunions* - an interactive monumental black pyramid structure that can be entered by a single participant. Commonly called a "psychomanteum" by grief practitioners, the structure is intended to serve as an aid in the grieving process: visitors are encouraged to bring an object that belonged to a deceased loved one in order to spend some time in quiet remembrance.

Guarina Lopez shot the photographs included in *This Native Land* throughout the seasons on the traditional homelands of the Piscataway and the Anacostan in Rock Creek Park and Roosevelt Island, as well as the traditional homelands of the Tewa, Santa Clara, Pascua Yaqui, and Tohono O'odham in the Southwest. The resulting series is the Pascua Yaqui activist and artist's photographic homage to Mother Earth. The moments of beauty, tragedy, and resilience in the landscape that Lopez captures in her photographic series serve as metaphors for the story of our nation's first people.

Lex Marie's newest paintings depict frank and vulnerable moments from the pandemic year as experienced by a single Black mother and artist; her unapologetic self-portrait *At His Daddy's House* captures her luxuriating in a rare moment of solitude.

Jackie Milad's wall hangings chart her reaction to the social upheaval and unrest of the pandemic from within the confines of her studio. Milad's visual lexicon, which includes fragments of ancient Egyptian imagery and snippets of Spanish text, draws heavily from her personal history and builds to kaleidoscopic crescendos of color, texture, and imagery.

Jared Nielsen started *Animal A Day* in January 2021. The project marks the passage of time with a creative challenge: to pick and study an animal a day from Wikipedia's "Bestiary" page and then draw it in ink, often from memory. Experienced in their totality, Nielsen's line drawings chart his growth as a draftsman while also drawing attention to the charm and diversity of planet earth's living creatures whose very existence is threatened by climate change. Nielsen will be taking daily requests for an animal to be added to the ongoing collection throughout the exhibition; follow him at @nielsenjared on Instagram for more details.

Bahar Yürükoğlu's *IYKYK* is a new sound, video, and found object installation. In the work, she poetically interprets the alternately mundane and chaotic experience of living through the pandemic in fragments of sound and imagery taken from a myriad of sources including online, in airplanes, and on the streets of Istanbul and Beirut.

A virtual artist talk with the exhibiting artists will be held on July 1 at 6pm on Zoom. The event is free but registration is required. For more information and to register, go to: <https://arlingtonartscenter.org/events/2021/07/we-cant-predict-tomorrow-artist-talk/>

ABOUT ARLINGTON ARTS CENTER

AAC programs are supported in part by The Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation; Arlington County through the Arlington Cultural Affairs division of Arlington Economic Development and the Arlington Commission for the Arts; the Virginia Commission for the Arts/National Endowment for the Arts; the Washington Forrest Foundation; The Community Foundation for Northern Virginia; and generous individual donors.



Arlington Arts Center is an independent, non-profit contemporary arts center and gallery that enriches community life by connecting the public with contemporary art and artists through exhibitions, educational programs, and artist residencies. Located at 3550 Wilson Blvd, Arlington, VA, it is open Wed-Sat, 12:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m., or by appointment. AAC is free, has on-site parking, is easy to reach by metro and bus, and is accessible. For more information about its other upcoming summer exhibitions, its summer camp and educational programs, or its event rentals visit: arlingtonartscenter.org. Exhibition images are available here: https://www.dropbox.com/sh/uvdw0q9pbqv9cge/AAAJRholetCqFL9hk1Cc7_Mna?dl=0